

Diagnostic Tool for School and District Effectiveness

On-Site Needs Assessment

Final Report



BEDS Code	310500011148
School Name	Eagle Academy for Young Men of Harlem
School Address	6 Edgecombe Avenue, New York, NY 10030
District Name	NYCDOE CSD 5
Principal	Mahaliel H. Bethea II
Dates of Visit	April 9-11, 2019



Purpose Of The Visit

This school was identified as needing additional support by the New York State Education Department (NYSED). Because of this identification, NYSED arranged for an Integrated Intervention Team (IIT) to visit the school. The visit is intended to help the school identify areas of need that are making long-term success a challenge and provide several visible Quick Wins that can be accomplished and demonstrate the school’s commitment to improvement.

The report provides a critical lens to help the school best focus its efforts.

School Performance

New York State uses multiple indicators to determine the identification status of schools across the state. For each of these indicators, schools receive a number of 1 (lowest), 2, 3, or 4 (highest) that corresponds with how the school performed in relation to either other schools and/or performance targets. More information about how these levels are determined can be found at: <http://www.nysed.gov/accountability/essa-accountability-designation-materials>

The most recent results for the “All Students” group at the school are as follows:

Elementary/Middle School Performance Indicators

Composite Performance Achievement Level	Student Growth Level	Combined Composite and Student Growth Level	English Language Proficiency Level	Average ELA and Math Academic Progre1ss Level	Chronic Absenteeism Level
1	1	1	-	1	1

Eagle Academy for Young Men of Harlem serves 374 students in grades six to eleven.

Information About The Visit

- The visit was led by an Outside Educational Expert (OEE) and a representative from NYSED. The team also included a district representative.
- The team visited a total of 31 classrooms during the visit.
- The OEE visited 7 classrooms with the principal during the visit.
- Team members conducted interviews with students, staff, and parents.
- Team members examined documents provided by the school, including attendance team plan, merit and demerit system, achievement tracker, data analysis form, in classroom look-fors, and Eagle Core Values.
- In advance of the visit, 20 staff members (74 percent) completed a DTSDE pre-visit survey conducted by NYSED.

Successes Within The School That The School Should Build Upon:

1. The school has a college mentoring program this school year that is making a positive impact and affords students the opportunity to form relationships with former graduates of other Eagle Academies and receive tutoring and preparatory classes. The mentors also assist students in meeting both the high school graduation requirements, as well as college entry requirements. The tutoring program has helped students pass sections of the Regents exam. The CLEAR 2 College program meets after school during the week, and on Saturdays. The students stated that they look forward to these classes and meeting with their mentors. Students volunteer to take this program.
2. Many teachers had detailed lesson plans available for review by the Integrated Intervention Team (IIT). The lesson plans were kept in a binder labeled “Observation Binder” within the classroom. The lesson plan template used by teachers includes the lesson objective, content standards and learning targets to be addressed throughout the lesson, vocabulary, plans for assessment, as well as the steps to be taken within the workshop model framework to teach the lesson. The teachers stated that planning detailed lessons has allowed them to focus on the needs of the students in their classroom. They also stated that putting them in binders this year has avoided interruptions when school leaders or visitors to the school enter the classroom for observations.
3. This year, the school leader has initiated an inclusive hiring process that involves all stakeholders. Students shared that they take part in the teacher hiring process by voting on the teacher’s performance after prospective teachers conduct demo lessons. Teachers and parents are also involved in the hiring process. Staff stated that this has been very successful when identifying and hiring staff that buy into the vision of the school and sincerely care about the well-being of the students. The school has also been able to hire staff that represents the demographics of the school. Students stated that there are many male role models in various positions at the school. Some students also named male role models who they go to for advice, or to talk with about a problem they are experiencing.

Areas Of Need To Be Addressed For Long-Term Success

Systems for Improvement

- **School leaders should monitor the impact of support structures of daily support to address the social-emotional needs of students.** Staff shared that there is a point system in place that was created in order to determine at the end of the year, which of the four houses the school is divided into would be rewarded by taking a trip to Six Flags in New Jersey. While the IIT observed positive behavior points being given to students in one class following this system, in other classrooms, good and poor behaviors were not addressed using the point system. Staff reported that there is a transformation room located on the second floor, supervised by one staff member. The room is designed to redirect and reengage students’ behaviors; however, the IIT observed that the students in the room remained disengaged. The use of strategies to reengage students were not observed. For example, the IIT observed students yelling at one another and lounging in the room. Students were also observed running and pushing each other directly outside the room. In the future, the

school leaders should ensure that staff responsible to supervise the transformation room are making sure that it is being seen by students as a consequence, and not a place where they can have fun.

- **The school should focus on its vision to create a school community that focuses on the whole child and builds academic excellence, responsible leaders, and men of strong character.** The IIT found there is a need to revisit the vision and the mission of the school. The review team observed poor student behavior and a lack of respect for adults during class visits and in the hallways. The IIT also found that the house system does not promote community, collaboration, or unity towards a common goal or meet the vision of the school, as it causes the houses to compete against each other. There are no formal character-building activities in the building. Further, consistent implementation of a schoolwide behavioral plan could improve student behavior and emphasize the vision of the school.

Leadership and Organization at the School

- **School leaders need to consistently monitor programming, professional development (PD) implementation, instruction, and social emotional practices at the school.** The school has identified many goals, activities, PD sessions, and initiatives in the School Comprehensive Education Plan (SCEP). However, the principal stated that it has been difficult to implement and monitor the many goals and activities in the plan due to time constraints and other issues at the school that have become a priority, such as behavior. In the future, the principal should create goals, action plans, and short interval benchmarks that are aligned to existing initiatives. These plans should then be monitored and modified on a regular basis to ensure they are having a positive impact on student progress
- **School leaders should utilize the skills of staff to help meet the vision of the school and the needs of the students.** The IIT found that some teachers are effectively using methods of instruction that could be used school-wide. For example, an English language arts (ELA) teacher and a social studies teacher created a cross-curricular performance task for students in their classes. During the student focus meeting, many students mentioned the activity and thought more teachers should teach that way. In the future the school leader should create collaboration time for teachers to meet on curricular issues and special projects.
- **School leaders must provide feedback to teachers about their instructional practices.** The school leader and teachers stated that the majority of observations conducted at the school are done to comply with the Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) evaluation system and that regular walkthroughs and instructional rounds are minimal. Teachers stated that although school leaders may walk into their room, they receive minimal actionable feedback related to school leader classroom visits. In the future, the school leaders should conduct walkthroughs and provide feedback to teachers on a regular basis on how they can improve instructional practices that will promote student success.

Learning at the School

- **Teachers should develop content curriculum together in order to provide consistent content across grades.** Teachers stated that although there has been a focus this year on the alignment of Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS), they continue to create their own curriculum and decide what themes or concepts will be

taught during lessons. The principal shared that he relies on teacher professional judgment when determining what to teach. The IIT learned that the school has no established curricula for core subjects. This is hindering the school's ability to ensure that students are provided with a coherent curriculum that is meeting grade and content expectations. In the future, the principal should consider developing pacing plans to ensure that teachers are meeting grade-level/content expectations in accordance with New York State (NYS) standards during the school year.

- **Teachers need to use the designated time in the master schedule for daily grade level-collaboration on planning.** The IIT found that common preparatory time for teachers to collaborate with their grade level peers doesn't always occur. Teachers stated that this time is used to make copies, answer emails, call parents, or for personal use. Teachers stated that because each year the school adds another grade, there is a need for department meetings and collaboration time to ensure continuum from grade to grade. The teachers also stated there are limited opportunities for them to collaborate on curriculum, cross-curricular activities, themes, and grade level expectations.
- **Students should be given the opportunity to use available technology to support learning.** The review team found that students are not actively engaged in using technology, either through laptops, Chromebooks, or SMARTBoards. In classes observed by the IIT, SMARTBoards were only being used by teachers and were used as a basic chalkboard. Students stated that they would like to be able to use Chromebooks or laptops during classroom lessons. The school has a number of carts with laptops that can be signed out by teachers. The principal and teachers stated that more are needed at the school so that teachers do not need to sign-up to use them and wait until they are available

Stakeholder Perspectives on Areas of Need and Ideas for Improvement

- **Students stated that they are not asked what they would like to see at the school and do not have a voice in the operation of the school.** When the IIT asked students about the roles they play in the school, they stated that at times they are able to give feedback on teachers being interviewed for job openings but their voices are not being heard as it relates to sports, enrichment programs, recess, and extracurricular activities such as clubs. The IIT learned from students that they liked being part of the student council, but this year, it has not been active at the school. The school leader stated that due to time and schedule constraints it has been difficult to have student council this year.
- **Several students stated that there are minimal extra-curricular activities for students beyond recess and gym, which includes predominantly playing basketball.** Students stated that their desire for activities and extra-curricular activities are not being addressed. Students stated that in the past, there were many special events and activities during the school day. They also stated that they would like to see recess and more sports at the school. Students said they want to be able to experience other activities beyond basketball at the school, like art and music.
- **Parents feel that the school informs them of school activities and events, but the school does not necessarily include them on conversations about curriculum, college and career planning choices, and sensitivity issues.** Many parents stated that although the school maintains positive communication with them, and they are informed of opportunities for their children, special meetings, school activities, special programs, and school

events, they would also like to be an integral part of conversations about additional areas of concern across the school.